

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES
January 23, 2008

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded.

Members Present:

John Knox White
Robert McFarland
Robb Ratto
Eric Schatmeier (arrived 8:00 p.m.)
Nielsen Tam

Members Absent:

Michael Krueger
Srikant Subramaniam

Staff Present:

Barry Bergman, Transportation Coordinator

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. December 19, 2007

Chair Knox White noted that a full quorum was not present to consider the minutes, and that they would be addressed at the next meeting if a quorum was present.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

None.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Ratto noted that the Commissioners were invited to attend the grand opening of the downtown parking garage on January 31, 2008, at noon.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Open public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Close public hearing.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

7A. Overview of Car Sharing and Potential Applications in the City of Alameda

Staff Bergman presented the staff report. He noted that the City of Berkeley has implemented a program with City CarShare whereby the cars were available exclusively for City employees during the day, and for the general public on evenings and weekends, and that staff is looking at whether a similar arrangement might be desirable for Alameda. He noted that it could play a role in the Transportation Systems Management/ Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Plan. He noted that several for-profit car sharing companies, including Zipcar and U-Haul, have begun offering similar services, in addition to the non-profit City CarShare.

Bryce Nesbitt, City CarShare, noted that the company was a non-profit company that was begun for environmental reasons in 2002, in order to provide alternatives to the exclusive ownership of a vehicle. He noted that cars were parked at 150 locations throughout the Bay Area, and that the members were given an access token to enable them to access the cars. They have recently expanded to Fruitvale BART, and are considering adding sites in Alameda. He noted that density was one factor that enables car sharing to be successful, but was not the exclusive reason. He noted that car sharing worked well in neighborhoods where people would be willing to walk several blocks to pick up a car. He noted that an example of a neighborhood where car sharing would not work well was Jack London Square, which was quite dense, but people typically drive to destinations there. He noted that the sidewalks were not as active in that neighborhood. He noted that Library Gardens in Berkeley, a shared public-private parking garage, worked well. The amount of public parking depended on a computer projection of the parking demand.

Mr. Nesbitt described semi-private fleets, such as the City of Berkeley program, and added that the leased cars were readily available, but must be leased for the entire day or for months at a time. City CarShare could lease a car to an organization for part of the day. He noted that the cars would be otherwise available for the rest of the day. The primary demand for car sharing, since it was not used for commuting, was on evenings and weekends. He noted that was ideal for City use. He described the Berkeley model, which had been improved since the advent of online reservations, and had been active for two years. The City of Oakland has a similar program, and the cities of Albany and Richmond were considering it as well. He noted that in some instances, the City CarShare served as a person's one car, while for others it could take the place of a second car. They had noticed a dramatic reduction in the need for parking spaces, and a moderate reduction in the amount of driving. *Mr. Nesbitt* displayed a map, which described where the members were located.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* regarding the cost, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that the monthly membership fee was \$10 monthly, with an hourly fee of \$5 and 40 cents per mile, similar to a taxi. He noted that some competitors charged \$8 or \$9 per hour, but that mileage was free. As an environmentally based non-profit, they chose to charge for mileage.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* regarding the length of time a car could be kept, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that it could be kept as long as someone was willing to pay for it. He noted that it was not economical to keep for long periods of time. He noted that cars could be kept up to three days, but that back to back reservations could be made.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* regarding the kinds of cars that were available, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that they offered both large and small cars, depending on the kind of trip. He added that they had a number of Toyota Prius hybrids, MiniCoopers, and pickup trucks. He noted that by offering a number of vehicle types, that City CarShare enabled members to use different types of vehicles depending on their needs for a particular trip.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* whether a pod had been placed in a purely residential area such as Alameda's East End, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that was similar to the North Berkeley BART station and El Cerrito BART station. He noted that they planned to move down the Third Street corridor in San Francisco, which was planned to be dense but was currently not dense. He noted that generally 40 members were required to support a car.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* regarding contracts, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that the contract was month to month, with no further obligation beyond that.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* whether several members wished to use the car at the same time, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that it was first-come, first-served. If a member's favorite car was not available, they would be able to use their next choice. Generally, one-third of people reserve well in advance, one-third the night before, and one-third reserve just before driving. He noted that 10% took the bus to the car, 10% took a train, 7% biked to the car, and that most people walked to the car.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner McFarland* about the decision-making process in where to place cars, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that they looked at the displayed map and looked for early adopters, transit lines, and neighborhood characteristics such as walkability.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* regarding the integration of car sharing with new developments, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that they had done just that, and had mixed results with that strategy. They had strong developer interest, some compelled by City ordinance such as in San Francisco and some driven by a desire to add a green feature to the development. He noted that the fact that car sharing was compelled by an ordinance did not mean it was a good location. The developers tended to try to make the cars available exclusively for the residents of the development. While that has some cachet, the vehicle was not part of the larger network of vehicles, which was an important factor in the success of the network.

Chair Knox White noted that the use of car sharing in senior housing had been brought up at a City Council meeting. *Mr. Nesbitt* responded that such a location was a good opportunity. He noted that seniors may not want the hassle of maintaining the car, and part of the service provided by City CarShare is to wash and maintain the cars. He believed that would be a good

match for senior communities, but noted that seniors were often conservative in adopting new ideas, and that a car was often part of their identity. He suggested that this should be examined carefully, because cars were an emotional component to people's lives, even though it may be the most practical solution. They had a program in St. Paul's Towers, a vibrant senior community on the north end of Lake Merritt; the program had met with mixed success in that location. The hourly rate for City CarShare included gas, maintenance, roadside assistance and \$1 million of insurance.

Commissioner Schatmeier arrived at this time.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* regarding the practical meaning of leaving "sufficient gas for the next member," *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that should read a half tank; their competitors require a quarter tank of gas. He noted that the cost of gas is included in the price, and that members have access to a gas card. The cars were unattended, which allowed City CarShare to park a single car in a location. They operated 24 hours a day, the car is returned to its original location, and if the gas was left below half a tank, the driver would fill the car up on the way back.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner McFarland* regarding the maintenance schedule, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that a maintenance crew cleans and checks the cars every two weeks. They often service the cars in place in order to minimize downtime. He noted that cars were retired after two to three years, depending on the model.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* regarding a cost analysis, *Mr. Nesbitt* replied that had been performed, although comparing a fully maintained, clean vehicle versus a private car owner's vehicle was a complex analysis. He noted that a driver who did not use a vehicle frequently would save money with City CarShare, although heavy users with daily commutes should own their own cars. He noted that they tried to place at least two cars, but not more than five cars, at any location, which they called "pods." He noted that they had also spoken to Bike Alameda regarding potential locations.

No action was taken.

7-B. Review and Comment on Proposed Harbor Bay Business Park Esplanade Development

Staff Bergman presented the staff report, and noted that the Planning Department had made the determination that the project was within the scope of the existing City-approved CEQA document, and therefore, no additional CEQA was required.

Joe Ernst, SRM Associates, project developer, described the scope and layout of the proposed project, and displayed an overview of the project on the overhead screen. He described the project amenities, including public seating, the lagoon and the improvement of private access road through the site; he noted that the access road through the project site to the ferry terminal was currently in poor shape. He displayed and described the architectural features of the site. He noted that the project would be designed as a LEED-certified site, and that there would be no

new grass in the project in order to save water usage. He displayed the circulation diagram, which showed existing bike paths, proposed AC Transit stops and shuttle stops.

Staff Bergman noted that there is an awkward sidewalk connection at the northwest corner of the intersection of the access road and Bay Edge Road, and that staff had discussed with Mr. Ernst the possibility of improving this. *Mr. Ernst* responded that they would examine the two-foot grade change with Public Works to see what options were available.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* regarding public parking, *Mr. Ernst* replied that if a café were to be placed there, the public would be able to park there. He noted that they did not plan to install gates and fences at the site.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* regarding the applicant's request for a variance, *Mr. Ernst* replied that technically, a variance would be required, and he hoped it would not be an issue. Planning staff requested that they find ways to reduce the number of parking spaces in order to promote fewer cars. He noted that when AC Transit discontinued its shuttle to BART, the business park introduced a private shuttle, which had been moved to a larger bus. He added that a second bus may be added because of the growth of the program. *Chair Knox White* suggested that the developer ensure the business park tenants be made aware of the transportation alternatives to driving. *Mr. Ernst* replied that was part of their TDM, and added that the Ferry Terminal was a great benefit to the park.

Open public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Close public hearing.

No action was taken.

8. Staff Communications

Staff Bergman noted that the Transportation Commission decision regarding bus stops along Encinal Avenue between Broadway and High Street had been appealed to City Council and was scheduled for February.

Staff Bergman noted that the City Council requested a report from staff regarding a proposed facility near the Posey Tube between Webster and Mariner Square Drive, and directed staff to look for funding for a Park-and-Ride facility or a transit hub. Staff has developed some preliminary designs, but the anticipated funding of \$1.3 million was not available. In response to a question by *Chair Knox White*, *Staff Bergman* stated that he believed the cost estimate included at least some of the drainage issues on the site that need to be addressed.

Commissioner Schatmeier expressed concern that that project would delay the running time of the buses, and asked that the design for the project attempt to minimize this extra time. *Staff Bergman* responded that staff would work closely with AC Transit on this.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* whether the Estuary Feasibility Study was awarded at the City Council meeting, *Staff Bergman* replied that was correct.

a. Broadway/Jackson Project

Staff Bergman noted that the consultant team was working on the traffic analysis and forecast. The initial review indicated that the use of 6th Street in Oakland as a major arterial corridor seemed to be viable. The off-ramp would come down at Webster Street from northbound I-880. Staff would provide updates when they were available.

b. Update on City Council action regarding Line 63

Staff Bergman noted that the Line 63 issue was discussed at the January 15 City Council meeting, and that all of the Transportation Commission's recommendations were approved, with the exception of the location of bus stops. City Council directed staff to seek funding to redirect Line 63 onto Shoreline from Otis Drive onto Grand and Shoreline.

Commissioner Ratto expressed strong concern about the need for funding to make these route changes.

Staff Bergman noted that about \$50,000 was available for improvements, but the additional amount for Shoreline (\$112,000) was not yet available.

Chair Knox White requested that staff maintain an item on the agenda under Staff Communications to follow up on this item.

c. Update on parking restrictions at bus stops

Staff Bergman indicated that the City Council had approved the resolution to implement parking restrictions at bus stops on Encinal Ave. and Central Ave., and that this would take care of implementing parking restrictions at most of the remaining bus stops. He indicated that including these 10 stops, there are about 15-16 stops that need to be addressed, out of a total of approximately 300 stop locations citywide.

d. Grant applications

Staff Bergman noted that three grant applications were submitted for the State's Safe Routes to School program, administered by Caltrans. They were submitted for curb extensions at the intersection at Grand and San Jose, and for the addition of a school crosswalk at the intersection of Benton and Central; for the purchase of radar speed signs on Grand Street and Central

Avenue; and for in-pavement lights at the crosswalk in front of Wood Middle School on Grand between Otis and Shoreline. Applications were also submitted to the Caltrans Community-based Transportation Planning Grant program for the Long-Range Transit Plan update, and to the Transit Technical Planning Assistance Program for the Citywide TSM/TDM program. The City has also submitted an application to fund signal coordination on Webster Street.

e. Future meeting agenda items

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.